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ABSTRACT

This is a collection of poetry and nonfiction pieces that I have written while I attended Cedarville University for four years. Each piece of writing originated from my musings and experiences during my college career. I write humor pieces not only to poke fun at things, but also to help understand the world around me and the experiences I have. In no way, do I ever want to think that I have made it as a writer, but that I am always in progress of becoming a better writer and working on my craft. The nonfiction short "Heart" has been published in *Every Writer's Resource's* online journal.

A WORK IN PROGRESS

By

David J. Gruber

A Collection of Creative Writing Submitted to the Faculty of the Department of English,
Literature, and Modern Language at Cedarville University in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Creative Writing Minor

Cedarville, Ohio

2016

Approved by

INTRODUCTION

The toughest question I have ever been asked: “What motivates you to get up in the morning?” I panicked, for a moment. I stated a lie that I myself did not believe at the time—one that I don’t believe now. This question wasn’t brought up a few years ago, when I dealt with the news my mom had breast cancer, when my grandpa had passed away, or when the passenger’s side door of my 2001 Honda Accord was smashed in as I steered my car in between the changing gas prices and a now dented Speedway sign— if you look you can see the dent that is there. I did not have a legitimate truthful answer to this question. Looking back I have realized that the answer to this question is the same answer that I have to the question: “Where do you see yourself in five years?”

This collection of work that I have done throughout my undergraduate experience is my way of answering that question. These writings are a snapshot of my thoughts and experiences of life—viewed in kaleidoscope. They help me to understand things in a different viewpoint. So many times—and many more I presume— I have failed to put myself in someone else’s shoes simply because I found it uncomfortable that the shoe didn’t fit. It wasn’t supposed to fit. I understand that idea now.

To conform to someone’s shoes means that I completely understand and emphasize with a person. Shoes don’t fit because they are made to fit perfectly. In fact, shoes are usually bought with the idea you’ll grow into it. Get this: You have to grow into the shoe while you travel. It’s crazy to think when you try on a shoe you don’t want it to completely fit. You think we would want a shoe that fits us completely. Perfectly fit shoes have space in them so that we can continue to grow while we wear them.

I have come to own many pairs of shoes after this past summer when I worked at Kohl's. I also own a few number of hats. I think that's my role as a writer is to own as many hats and shoes as I can. But what good is it to just own them, if you don't wear them? Nothing. Hats and shoes are supposed to be worn either on your feet or head. This collection is simply my way of trying on different hats and shoes on as a writer, figuring out what fits me and what I need to fit into. A writer should never think they can't write something, they should write with determination to leave nothing as average. If a writer doesn't think this way, they should not be writing.

Going back to the opening statement, my motivation for getting up in the morning is simply to dress up as someone different than the person who I slept as the night before. I don't have to look in a mirror to know that I'm different man waking up in the morning than when I went to bed last night—no matter what time of my life I am taking about. I still have to get dressed, still have to tie my shoes, and I still have to put a hat on—when the weather calls for it that is. At least I have an honest answer to the question, *what motivates you to get up in the morning?* To try as many shoes on as possible and know that I will grow into them. If the shoes fit, I will throw the pair away and get another one that I can grow into.

FOREWORD

When I was a kid, I didn't know what I wanted to be when I grew up. I thought about being a garbage man, a policeman, a fireman, a baseball player, even being a business owner. I even said to my mom I wanted to work/own a flower shop so that I could give her flowers every day. Yet, even right now, I still have no idea about what I want to do. The only I know I want to do is to write.

I've often ask myself how exactly does writing compare to working in the missions field? Why did God give me a passion for writing? And what is my role as a writer? The answers to these questions lie in three simple words: hope, purpose, and truth.

Hope is something that we often don't see, but we try to envision it. We often think of hope as firefighter coming to save someone who is trapped in a multiple story building, rescues them just before the building becomes engulfed in flames. Hope looks different when something is lost. Life isn't filled with successful rescue missions, where the firefighter always gets the person who needs to be rescued. Hope comes in many different perspectives, not just as rescue mission. As a Christian writer, I have come to learn that hope can exist after the fact something has happened. If hope could only happen when something is presently taking place, this world would look completely different.

Dealing with Hope means to authentically present it as is; something that is sought after an action has taken place. It is a reassurance of something—a belief that the situation will change through a promise. As a Christian writer, if I can't deal anything honestly and with authentic humanity, including a subject like hope, I need to leave out of the piece altogether (Richard Terrell 250). If hope exists in the form of a rescue mission, it is not hope at all. It's only a convenience for me as the writer and does little for the purpose of the

story. The purpose of a story is often misconstrued through academic agendas. Despite all the papers that I have written for an analysis, a story is a piece of art that is meant to be entertainment (Francis Schaffer 35). Stories can have purposes; however, the purpose of a story is to be only a story. Stories are what we really wish for when we blow out the candles on our birthday. We want to live in any given moment as someone else. We want to be something more than ourselves. Stories should make us want to be completely immersed in a world that isn't known to us. A world where realism exists through the senses and concrete images, so much so that our imagination is completely enhanced to be able to capture the world in time and space.

As a Christian, I should not only want this feeling to be prevalent in my writings, but also in my very soul. I want to be more than a very existence where all I do is mundane tasks. I was not created to do mundane things, but for greatness (Jeremiah 29:11). Greatness has and never will be achieved by lack of effort. Aside from Jesus, greatness is not born. It is born through how we respond to failure. Failure is going through draft after draft to finally hit gold. Failure is a pathway to being great. You have to know how to deal with failure in order to be great at something.

We all want to be great. It is a desire within ourselves to be more than we are right now. We want to be windows (C.S. Lewis 51). We as Christians, we should strive to be clear windows for Christ, so that when people see us, they see a window view of Christ himself. I want to illuminate this idea in my writings; God sees greatness in us even when we can't really see him that clearly. I want to inspire people to live their lives as clean windows, to live as clear window even in the midst of hope, so that they too can find truth.

Truth is something I often mistake as definition. Definitions are made up. Truth isn't. Truth is the order in which things should be. It is simply a state of how the world should be, and what it is not. I as a Christian and as a human being want it. I want to know what is right and wrong, but truth is not a matter of rights and wrongs. I like to think of truth as a piece of a puzzle that we always seem to be missing that if we had then everything would make sense. The puzzle would be complete and the picture would be formed. Truth isn't actually small in size. It's quite big. So big it is often broken up in bite-sized pieces so that we are able to chew on it. Truth is eating an elephant, you need to digest it one bite at a time.

I want to be labeled as truthful writer. Does this mean I should not bend it or omit anything from the original story? Yes and no. I do want to tell the truth, but when a piece of writing is better something omitted or bent, I need to let the piece of writing live as a lie. If a piece of my writing is labeled as a lie, it means I am not done with it yet. There is more to the story I have written just as there is more to the story God has written for my life even if I can't see hope through a window just yet. To resonate truth in my writings, I need to capture pain.

Pain hurts. It's a fact. Yet, I often find myself not admitting pain doesn't hurt that much. Pain is something I bear that I shouldn't. It's that chip on our shoulder we shouldn't have. I admit that I wear it as a badge of honor. I need to take off this badge I wear and put it into papers in the form of words. In those words, I need to remember the pain I felt. In those words, I can assemble truth; understand faith and creation (Robert Klein Engler 263). Without pain, nothing can ever be real.

For something to be truly real in writing, I need to capture that thing in its very existence. Not something as cage, tamed, or domesticated. I need capture the raw side of human emotion. The side we put away when things get to intense because we can't deal with what is happening. As Chad Walsh puts it, "Things are real; they are real because God made them; and, because he made them, they are important and worthy of study and even a proper portion of love (171)." It is in what's real we find hope, purpose, and truth. More importantly, there is redemption.

Redemption is what makes the real so interesting. I find that when I am real, I often need redemption. It is the human body's response to crave redemption. It is often misidentified as justice. Justice is not redemption. As a Christian, I know redemption is what I want instead of justice. When redemption exists, so does incompleteness. Incompleteness and redemption go hand in hand. You can't have one without the other. With incompleteness and redemption comes tragedy. The tragedy of my writing should be played out so that the incompleteness of the world affects the very characters that live in it (Flannery O' Conner 167). Redemption helps to brings things in perspective that this world is not what it is meant to be. Redemption gives us a picture of hell before and picture of heaven after.

The idea of writing about either Heaven or Hell intrigues me both as a Christian and as a writer. To write about either of these places, I would have to focus on concrete images, give the reader a glimpse of the experience through the senses. But more importantly, I would need to incorporate the ideas of hope, purpose, and truth. Through these things, bring redemption into the reader's perspective. The hardest part of writing isn't always getting started, it's continuing to go on and discover the greatness within you.

Going back to the questions about why God gave me a passion for writing, and how does writing compare to working in the missions' field? And what is my role as the writer? The answer is to express the ideas of hope, purpose, truth in everyday life—even a fictional one. To put it another way, it is to write about a glimpse of heaven in the midst of hell.

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A FRIDAY NIGHT AT WENDY'S IN SPRINGFIELD, OH

She came in like Miley Cyrus,
In terms of the Fray,
She is a hurricane,
a whirling mass of emotion.
Who is classified as pissed and
traveling to shores of Oh Hell Naw.
She threw a jar against the wall,
raining obscenities and pocket change.
She might have wanted to break the internet,
Instead she broke the cash register.

I'm not one to speculate
but writing about this incident is how I must operate.
unlike Wendy's at this moment.

MOGADOR

She stands outside the yellow broken house
cold and afraid.
Motionless, she waits for
a whisper or a wave of a hand.
I beckon to her;
she does not come.
(She can't see me, but I can see her.)
Familiar with her name,
I call out, "Hope, come in!"
She does not acknowledge me.
She doesn't know who I am;
she knows little about my existence.
She continues to stand outside the yellow broken house.

Dear Hope, my half-sister, will you come in
to help repair the yellow broken house?

SCUTTLEBUTT

So, what's the scuttlebutt?
It is one of life's big questions.
The meaning of scuttlebutt is
how many licks it takes
to get to the center of a Tootsie Pop.
We may never know.

It's one of the Seven Wonders of the World.
It's up there with Waldo, Carmen San Diego, Bigfoot,
the lost sock from the laundry, the Loch Ness Monster, and South Dakota.
I swear that scuttlebutt appeared after they disappeared,
which is a bit suspicious, if you ask me.
Something is up.

Scuttlebutt makes you think.
When you hear it,
you'll want to wink.
Can you see scuttlebutt, or hear it too?
Does it come in a variety of colors?
Green, red, pink, or blue?
It is like waiting for the Great Pumpkin, Charlie Brown.

Eventually, I have to believe that
scuttlebutt will appear through the grapevine,
or maybe I'll hear it around the water cooler.

THE CRANE GAME

Here I sit in enclosed glass,
squashed among friends,
hoping that these days would end.

How I wish to get out of here.
How I wish to be out there.
I would hate to lose my friends,
but my fear of the claw would
be gone.

I was built in a factory,
living in this glass box is my reality.
I've always dreamt of one day
being part of a family.

Above me, lives an iron claw.
It enforces its own law.
It chooses us—
grasping its three fingers around us.

Then it drops us—
into that box over there
(or as we refer to it as Sid)
telling you this makes
my cotton ball butterflies fluttering.

Even though, we don't like it in here...
Oh no! Sid has come to play.
I look forward to getting out of here one day.
Until then, I must keep my stitches from shaking.

THE PROGRESSION OF MY SO-CALLED “ACTING CAREER”

ACT I

Shows me standing at the podium, receiving an Oscar—joining the ranks of DiCaprio, Hanks, Crowe, Washington. Where I recite the words Mrs. Brubaker’s once spoke to me after an elementary school assembly in my acceptance speech, *I thought you were very good today up there... You should consider acting.*

ACT II

Is where I am at that school assembly where a theatre company came to perform for us.

For our next skit we need a volunteer, one of the actors say.

I raise my hand. I’m not sure why I do. Instincts, I guess. The actor points to me.

You in the white Pokémon shirt. Come on up.

I can’t remember the exact details of the scene. Maybe I say NO to being peer pressured into using drugs, maybe I talk to one of the puppets they had, and maybe I act like a cow. I remember the maybes; and not the lines, actions, and scene.

ACT III

Now, as you go back to your seat, I want you to scream like a girl.

I scream with my arms waving as I leave the stage to sitting an ovation, stepping between the spaces between the cross-legged sitting students. The people—faculty, staff, students—love it as I sit down to the congratulatory high fives from my classmates.

ACT IV

Shows me on stage in a red V-neck dress in two different scenes—the first scene is to experience the Shakespearean acting method as I look through a chink in the wall in *A Midsummer's Night Dream*. The second—well first time actually—is for a Game Show outreach night for my youth group. A boy looks at me as I walk down the aisle to take my place on the stage, *what are you looking at?* I say.

Nothing, he says.

Keep your eyes forward.

Believe me I want to.

ACT V

I come out on stage for my soliloquy—my thoughts and motivations behind my actions. Before I hold my fist to Ryan Perkin's face reenacting a scene from *Full House*. Before I call my brother worthless—when I didn't mean it. Before I have to use two remotes to work the TV.

TO A FRIEND

A person becomes sassy by putting on their pants
one leg at a time.
We are all humans.
I don't care that you think sass is a mask that
you wear to the occasional Halloween party.
I refuse to believe this,
much like I don't believe in
the existence of North Dakota.
If my tone seems a bit overstated,
forgive me, I am a mirror.
Monkey see, monkey do,
Monkey will throw his poop at you.
Talk to the hand
as I roll my eyes.
Clean off those broken glasses,
or you can take the short bus
to the exit where the sun doesn't gleam.

From,
a self-absorbed iPod listener

THE LIFE OF A BROCHURE MODEL

The life of a brochure model
is not a life that gives out second chances.
It does have a certain look,
it gets judged like the cover
of a book.

Crinkled up, folded over.
The life of a brochure model
is a life lived on a piece of paper.
It will all be—
disposed.

A trifold piece of paper gets
tossed around like a guy's laundry.
Eventually, you won't find it.

The life of a brochure model is
not so glamorous.
You get torn up, neglected,
and trashed—either way you
get canned.

If you're lucky enough, then
maybe, just maybe, you'll
make it on the fridge, but
that is a huge, huge—
if.

A TOUR GUIDE AT THE PIZZA BOX ART MUSUEM

My name is Di Gior No,
I will be your senses to the visual magnifi-CONT.
I have dallied with the arts.
Like Picasso, faces are not my thing.
He neither passed anatomy nor looked in a mirror.
Certainly, the pizza box will dabble in the sauce,
It will become a string cheese harp, played with a stuffed crust.
Perhaps, the problem with art is that there is no meat.
Just serve it with bacon and you'll get a heart attack.
Be careful. It's hot.

A patriotic scene would be fitting.
Here comes George Washington riding on a moose,
gallivanting over the pepperoni and sausage.
A Tyrannosaurus Rex is on a swing, trying to clear the 2" cardboard sides.
A squirrel water skis,
maneuvering through the veggies,
looking to jump off the pizza table.
It looks like he'll make it.
I doubt it. He'll just sink in the deep dish of grease.

PAC-MAN wouldn't be able to *nom nom nom* from the ghosts.
He would gain ten pounds thinking that the pizza was a yellow dot.
Who only eats dots and fruit?
Perhaps, we all do.

Chomp away at that thought for a moment.

MAYBE IS THE NEW NO

Our body needs energy.
We use 33% of it to protect
our God-given rights:
life, liberty, and a nation-wide cellphone coverage.
Food brings people together,
except in the case of riots.
I don't care about your party.
Life is an awkward middle school dance.
We convert 10% of our energy into a unified hatred
toward Nickelback.
5% of our energy is used to admit
that we actually listen to them.
Our xylophone friend taps his bones
in the claustrophobic's horror.
15% was redeemed for a small fry,
chicken patty, and a used piece of gum.
10% of our energy is converted into Canadian money,
might as well be plastic.
We often dream of simpler times.
If you ask me, you have run out of people to ask.
We don't know what to say, so 25% of our energy
is used to make incoherent noises,
often referred to as excessive *ums* and *likes*.
We play the real-life game of Pretty Pretty Princess.
The last bit of energy is 2% Milk.
These percentages give do not give
me the motivation to make plans
for your band's performance,
which is about two hours away
from where I am right now.

MOUSE TRAP

You connive your way into the house—sneaking in through the pipes. You came to the bowl that you couldn't get out of—drowning in it. Taking puffs of oxygen just isn't as satisfying. You fool me. You fool mom. You fool yourself when you overdose. You follow something yet you can't tell what it is—happiness, hysteria, food. I hate to be blunt like this, but I did find you. You lay still—lifeless at the bottom of the toilet, while the smell of cigarette smoke still lingers in the couch cushions.

A BOY'S IMAGINATION

On the battlefield of the living room floor,
I think of all the slain troops lying on the threads of the carpet
and the green faces of comrades
pleading for a medic.

All the LEGO pieces are scattered
amongst the toy cars purring for attention,
dying for affection.

The Gameboy rests its cyclopes' eye
to gather strength in order to pillage
lands in another dimension.

Therefore,
kids grow
to be like gods
in the playroom.

FALLING ASLEEP

In my mind is a field of visions,
waiting to be harvested.
I am sitting on a tractor.

My skin cries salted tears.
I gaze the orange and purple tie dye mural
at the bottom of a fresh scooped grave.

The field is full of vivid visions,
I sleep in the light-green grass
at the edge of the field.

My dog stands by me,
pawing the cold earth with his front legs,
searching for another dog's treasure.

THE SWEET LIFE PONDERINGS (LESSONS TO A KID)

There are two kinds of people in this world;
Smarties and dumb-dumbs.

Science tells us that the Milky Way
contains billions of stars.
However, The Mars Corporation says that it
consists of chocolate, caramel, and nougat.
Take your pick.

Rainbows are reflected and refracted light,
They also taste like Skittles.
I once took a bite out of rainbow.
It did not taste like Skittles.

I met someone from Hungary,
They told me their name,
But I knew they were someone else.
Snickers taught me well.

I had a friend named Reese.
I asked him for his Peanut Butter Cups.
We are no longer friends.

IN RESPONSE TO THE WOMAN WHO LEFT HER GRANDMOTHER'S ASHES IN KOHL'S

The dead called—

She wanted to see her grandmother.
Her grandmother *urned* to shop again.
Her sole was a bit worn,
so she went to buy some shoes.

She is now in the Misses section,
searching for that black dress to wear.
Gliding over to the greeting the cards,
she wants to say one last hello.
Hallmark is starting to make headstones,
some are able to sing.
Floating over to the Bed & Bath section,
she searches to find a new resting place.

The dead hangs up the phone.
The doors close.
Keys insert into the lock.

The visiting hours have passed
as her grandmother is placed into a black Hefty body bag.

WOODWORKING

He stretches the tape measure to one end of the 2 by 4 to the other end. He tells me to mark the wood with a faint line from a number 2 pencil. So, I do. He takes the band saw and begins to graze the edges of unneeded wood. Then he tells me to scrape the coarse grain of the wood with fine grain sandpaper, rubbing it down until the wood became polish.

After I sand down the wood, he aligns the two pieces of wood on the table to form a 90⁰ corner, gluing the two edge pieces of wood forming a frame where three shelves will go. Then he clamps down the two pieces of wood together so that they become cemented together. After the glue dries, he attaches the shelves one at a time. We repeat the process again: measuring, cutting, pasting each of the three shelves. Then he glazes the newly built shelf with a finishing stain as I stare at the shelf that I helped to create.

TO THE TABLE NEXT TO ME AT THE HIVE

I'm glad that you're as fascinated
with discussing bears at dinner than
they are interested in you right now.
Listening to this conversation
for the past fifteen minutes
has made me feel like I'm stuck in a bear trap.
Bears. Bears. Bears.
Fur real.
This is getting a bit grizzly for me to hear.
You aren't even talking about specific bears.
Yet, you still manage to roar
on about a matter that has been hibernating.
Like how a bear is with bees, you must be a hit with the ladies.
They must swarm to you.
I applaud you for finally talking about something else.
Except that you want to talk about skunks,
which are tiny bears that—
nope, never mind, you go back to talking about bears.
Here is a participation trophy.
You tried at least.
Take a moment to maul it.

BREAKING WIND

When I felt you,
I became embarrassed
—a beaming cherry red face.

I held you tight
as I possibly could.
I didn't want to release you
—just yet.

Some people's facial expressions
signaled disgust with your
presence. I admit,
I was the same way.
I wasn't ready to own up
and call you mine.
So, I continued to hold you close to me.

I'm sorry that pushed
you too much,
causing a rip between us.
I was devastated when you left me.
Now, I am relieved
from your existence, the flatulent pressure
build up in my lower body.

COMMENTING ON POEMS ON I-70 TO BRANSON, MO

I am neither a chef nor a tour guide,
but when I read poems,
my imagination takes control.

Here comes the title,
saying that in about 3 miles,
the car should merge onto exit US-65.
At least it isn't Tom Raper Way.
Do I dare take that exit?
To your left, you will see
alliteration frolicking in the field,
chased by personification
like in elementary school.

To the kitchen I go.
Notice how the enjambment
gives the poem a bit of a kick
to it.
The poem was medium rare.
Try adding some punctuation to add
some zest and flavor to these poems.

Make it *SPICY*,
OOOHHH.....yeah.

HEART

I lay on the table, waiting for the ultrasound technician to come and look at my heart. It has a hole in it—somewhere on the septum. My dad told me once, but I forget where. I know the location is along a valve—tricuspid, mitral, aortic, pulmonary—somewhere between the left and right ventricle. I remember feeling the cold ultrasound gel spread upon my chest as the camera focuses over my heart. The conductive medium tightens the bond of the skin and the transducer in the form of waves, veins, red blood cells.

I—still alive—remember seeing my heart.

TO MY NEPHEW LUCAS

You have lived 574 smiles,
each crescent expression
celebrates the badge of joy touching your heart.
May you live many more smiles.

You have grown 76 giggles,
each one is found in a book.
Share it. Keep on growing.

Life isn't always
mashed carrots, spitting, and pooping.
It is a combination of these.

You will stumble when you walk,
but that's fine. Everybody does.
So when you need help,
come to me.

I will help you walk.

BELIEVELAND

Along the Lake Erie shoreline, summer never comes.
Men shovel the sidewalks as the lake effect snow
falls onto the freshly shoveled sidewalk.
Women walk over the slick ice while going to the grocery store,
as the kids dream about sunny days.

A city with enough salt to help
make it better, but the plowman
doesn't deliver.

In order to keep warm,
men & women, boys & girls
wrap each other's arms and bodies to keep warm
until the day the sun comes out
and the weather gets warm.

CANADIAN INTERROGATION TACTICS

I'm sorry about putting you
in this room. How about
a doughnut for your troubles,
eh?

Excuse me, while I hit you
so hard that a maple leaf
is imprinted on your face
and makes you bleed maple syrup.
You hoser.

You thought that putting
the stolen money into the lake
would make it go away, eh?
I'm sorry for telling you this,
but our money floats.

How about a doughnut
for all of your troubles, eh?

THE TITLE IS IRRELEVANT

This poem is the etch-a-sketch of your soul.
Look at it mocking your design ability. The nerve
or audacity that it has, such sass. Move it to the left
or to the right. Shake it like a snow globe.

The poem is now playing hide and go seek.
Can you find it? Look in the closest,
or underneath the bed. Search high
and underneath and over things,

beside and below things. Click now
for more information that will save
you hundreds on car insurance by this little trick.
Before you know you'll drive

down the street playing with that etch-a-sketch,
imagining that you are some big-wheel hot shot.
Don't forget to shake it,
as you continue to play hide and seek from the monsters.

THE ROAD

Left side on the right side and right side on left side the road interweaves
the road interweaves left side on the right side and right side on left side
the road interweaves
left side on the right side and right side on left side the road interweaves.

I won't forget this strange occurrence
on top of the overpass on exit to Branson, Mo.
I won't forget that left side on the right side and right side on left side
the road interweaves
the road interweaves left side on the right side and right side on left side
left side on the right side and right side on left side the road interweaves.

THE GAME-SHOW OF LIFE

Welcome to life
where the questions are multiple choice
and every true and false is somehow relative.

I would like *Situations* for 300.
This situation is often to associated
with puberty?
Suck it, Trebek.

The banker called—
your fly is down.
He says he loves you.
He suggests that you invest in some X-ray glasses.
Here's a penny for you.

The category is a resemblance of you.
Let's take a look at the board.
U AR QU T
T E IDI T
I would like to buy a vowel.
I have a coupon for all O's 50% off.
You have 2 O's,
with that purchase you got \$10 in Kohl's Cash.
I would like to solve the puzzle.
Is it *you are quite the idiot?*
How dare you say that about me?

The puzzle said it, not me.

BUILDING A POEM

Selecting an image in poem is
playing Jenga, one wrong move
and it all falls down like
the London Bridge.
Maybe if I had Legos I would make
something of myself,
a meniscal tower of Babe,
an ant's Burj khalifa.
Lincoln Logs would work
in order to build a cabin,
nothing more than an organized game of Pickup Sticks.
Perhaps, if I were Tonka I could just have
you do my bidding for me.
A legal form of child labor called education.
Bob the builder uses anthropomorphic automobiles.
What do I have?

If I build it,
people will come,
unless there are no roads.
I will lay down roads that lead to nowhere.

A TOPIC OF CONVERSATION

I don't know why people
often comment on the only life I have.
Apparently, I will have four kids.
According to my co-workers,
I will have
a boy and a girl, and whatever the other two will be.
The girl will be kind, sweet. She will be thin,
but not super thin. She will be a darling,
America's SweetTart.
The boy will probably be a disappointment.
Since, he's not worth mentioning twice.
He will be named A-arón.

The future is a dirty mirror,
which I should probably clean.
From the look of it, I will be oblivious
to my future family's existence.
I'm not trying to plan too much of my life ahead.
I don't even know what I want my next meal to be.

Quite frankly, I don't have the time.
I have to mop the floors,
and get the trash out the door.
Look into your Magic 8-ball,
and ask the Magic Mirror
about my future.
What you say is not worth poo-poo—
oh wise one.

A JOURNAL ENTRY FROM THE TRIX RABBIT

The heart murmurs
cries of crimson liquid.
It *ba-dum ba-dum*
inside of me.

I'm not a monster, nor do I lay eggs.
What does a rabbit have to do in order to feel
appreciated besides hiding eggs?
Toucan Sam and Sonny didn't like it when I hide
their capsuled hatchlings.
They were fed up with my tricks
and claimed I was cuckoo.
I replied, "I don't have any Trix and that's not even my cereal."

Once I get Trix,
I will stop rabbit slavery,
and pull the magician out of a hat.
If only the kids understood,
but my voice is never heard.
PETA never came to my aid,
They claimed that I'm not real.
No representation without lifelike presentation.

All by myself self-elf,
a feeling that is happy as a kid,
and sad when you're a cartoon rabbit.

I guess this is
how Pinocchio and the planet Pluto feel.

ON METAPHORICAL CLOUD 9

I want to travel in a bouncy castle.
Sure the handling is terrible, but the warranty
is what I want.
Does this come with a CARFAX?
The shipping will cover itself.
It must have a drawbridge that will
lower like the use of clichés among writers.
[Insert cliché here]

I demand that there is a moat
to keep out the Huns,
a sign just won't do.
I won't ever wear a man-bun,
the sweater vests of men's hairstyles.
Easy assembly is required
and not something that I need to be thorough about,
my first name isn't Henry.

I want to travel around the world in a bouncy castle,
or just get from one end of the yard to the other.

TRUE FACTS ABOUT POETRY

Poetry is a form of literature that uses expressive language to evoke meaning.
It is also one of the few legal forms of mind control.
The other two forms are NASCAR and late-night infomercials.

Verbs are the overall straps of a poem,
without them there would be nothing pretty to observe.

Poetry consist of several different kinds of genres
each has their own personality like the seven dwarfs.
Narrative poetry confesses to you through social media about its day.

I'm going to poop. #Onthethrone
Just dropping the kids off at the pool.
Boy do I feel a little flush J

Dramatic poetry transpires the Romeo and Juliet through the uses of Barbie, GI Joe, and stuffed animals.
Light poetry has half the calories of satirical poetry, and contains 0 trans fats.
Speculative poetry perches at its desk and ponders the meaning of life, God, and the 2 for \$20 deal at Applebee's.

VIVA PINATA

I dangle from the tree branch,
just above the unleashed creatures.

Oh, I do envy you who
aren't attached to a string.
life is breezy,
when you just hang.

Stuffed like Hansel and Gretel.
I am put on display
because of my coat,
the envy of Joseph's brothers.

Little gremlins gather
to wait and harvest my organs.
The pain is quick,
I've heard.
A mash to the face
will be my fate.

The executioner with eyes covered,
spins one, two, three times.
Kid, I will give you a Kit-Kat bar,
just give me a break.

Kick legs kick—

Oh, what's the use?
My legs never worked anyway.

UNFINISHED

My basement consists of brick walls, piles of stuff—board games, garbage bags of clothes, a broken down weight machine. It contains a large freezer that is filled mostly with freezer burned food. The useable stuff lies on top. In the corner of the basement, a treadmill needing to be fixed sits, waiting to walk the dog, go on a run, maybe a walk. Along the floor of the basement wall, you can see the discrepancy between two kinds of cement—one came with the house. My basement contains of my bedroom—dangling bedsheets, strung up Christmas lights, a partly soak wooden office desk. My basement is unfinished but not to me.

GRACE CHURCH

When you come riding on your donkey, please hitch it on the side street or at one of the shuttle locations: The Islander or Tomon & Sons Funeral Home. Once you head through the forest of palm branches, head into the clear glass doors to the congregation of padded stadium seats—about 2,000 of them eager to serve you. If you are hungry, there is a café where you can purchase some food. If you are thirsty, there different is water and free coffee for you to have.

When you look at the cross, remember the words painted on the mezzanine wall: “welcome” written in several languages. As you get ready to hear the message, view the piece of white cloth that dangles from nail to nail and a man who promises paradise.

HOROSCOPE OF A FIRST GRADER

Aries

(March 21st-April 19th)

Today, you won't have to listen to the book No, David! And have everybody point to you while listening to the teacher. No, class, no.

Taurus

(April 20th-May 20th)

You will develop a urinary tract infection from holding it during the first grade proficiency test, trying not to pee your pants. You will. BYOPP-Bring Your Own Pair of Pants.

Gemini

(May 21st-June 20th)

Today, you will stop spinning like the Tasmanian devil, swinging a baseball bat, trying to hit the ball on the tee. Dig in, twinkle toes.

Cancer

(June 21st-July 22nd)

Today, you will get hit in face in dodgeball—from your own teammate while you are lying down on your stomach.

Leo

(July 23rd-Aug. 22nd)

Today, you will wear a purple puffy coat on a windy day—coupled with the fact that you are lighter than you think; causing you to float a few inches above the ground. Hi de ho, Lindberg!

Virgo

(August 23rd-Sept. 22nd)

Today, you will forget that the glass sliding door is to the right of the windowed wall at Staple's. Your family will laugh. No therapy needed.

Libra

(Sept. 23rd-Oct. 22nd)

Today, you will watch as your brother runs around the house naked because he didn't want to eat his applesauce so he put it behind the couch. Dinner and a show.

Scorpio

(Oct. 23rd-Nov. 22nd)

Today, you will feel the comfort of wearing pull-ups because you won't go to the bathroom in the middle of the night. You will wear them until you're eleven.

Sagittarius

(Nov. 22nd-Dec. 21st)

Today, you will be playing with your toy cars in the same room as your mom while she is taking an afternoon nap on the couch. She will wake up and look at her wrist watch and say, "It's 3 o'clock!" and then goes back to sleep. Sweet dreams.

Capricorn

(Dec. 22nd-Jan. 19th)

Today, you will celebrate with a teammate that you lost a game, because you're #1 at losing. Bumper sticker on your mom's car reads: My son is an honors loser.

Aquarius

(Jan. 20th-Feb.18th)

Today, you will become line leader for girls despite the fact you are a guy. If you are a girl, boo-hoo. Behind every successful leader is a girl who has to pee, Allie Dudash.

Pisces

(Feb.19th-Mar.20th)

Today, you will go home from school because you threw up at lunch, seeing what only ketchup and salt mixed together tasted like—Heaven, then hell.